

APPLICANT(S): SHAHAR ATIR
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REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-17 are pending in the application. Claims 1-11 have been rejected. Claims 12-17 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claim 1 has been amended.

Applicants respectfully assert that the amendment to claim 1 adds no new matter.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 6 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow. In response to the Examiner's question "How is it possible to *sense the adjacent memory cells partially shared sensing path* (i.e. shared bit line between two adjacent memory cells) as claimed in claim 1 line 3, but later to have *sense circuit coupled to bit lines of said adjacent cells that are not shared by said adjacent cells* as claimed in claim 6 lines 2-3?" (and the same question as posed with regards to claim 11), Applicants would like to explain that memory cells have two bit lines. In one case, the bit line between the two adjacent cells may be sensed. Whereas, in a second case, the non-shared bit line (on the other side of each adjacent cell) may be sensed while sensing current is provided through the shared bit line –

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the at least partially shared sensing path. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no inconsistency between the claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 6 and 11 are proper under 35 U.S.C. §112, and request that the rejection of claims 6 and 11 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Thewes et al. (US Patent No. 5,831,892). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on several grounds, more notably the Examiner's inference of "implicit mitigation of neighboring effects", whilst there is absolutely no mention of neighboring effect in the cited reference, and the stated intent of the cited reference is to read in parallel adjacent cells using different terminal voltages. Despite this fact, and in the interest of furthering prosecution of the present application, Applicants have made a clarifying amendment to independent claim 1 so as to highlight its distinction from all known prior art references.

Amended claim 1 now recites:

A method of reading data in a virtual ground array of memory cells comprising: sensing substantially simultaneously a state of adjacent memory cells through at least a partially shared sensing path, wherein sensing includes applying a first voltage to a common word line and a substantially similar voltage to either a shared bit line or to non-shared bit lines.

Applicants respectfully points out that the Thewes reference teaches applying different voltages to non-shared bit lines and the Casagrande (US 4,807,188) reference, cited in the Final Office Action issued 20th May 2008, teaches a structure not having non-shared terminals. As is well established, in order to successfully assert a prima facie case of anticipation, the Examiner must provide a single prior art document that includes every element and limitation of the claim or claims being rejected. Thus, none of the cited references teach all the limitations of independent claim 1.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-5, 7-8 and 10 depend from, directly or indirectly, claim 1, and therefore include all the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 2-5, 7-8 and 10 are likewise allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to independent claim 1 and to claims 2-5, 7-8 and 10 dependent thereon.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Thewes in view of Maayan et al. (US Patent No. 6,975,536).

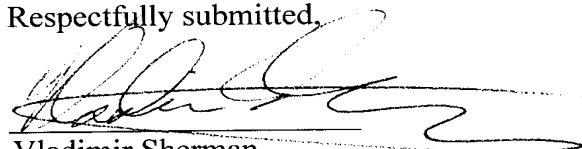
Applicants asserts that claim 9 is allowable by virtue of its dependence on an allowable base claim.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the pending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned Attorney of Record. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned Attorney of Record.

Please charge any fees associated with this paper to deposit account No. 50-3400.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: December 23, 2008